DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 121 699 SO 009 103

TITLE	The Revolution in American History. Curriculum Report, Vol. 5, No. 3.
INSTITUTION	National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Va.
PUB DATE	Apr 76
NOTE	13p.
AVAILABLE FROM	NASSP, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091 ($0.50, 2-10 copies $0.30)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Behavioral Objectives; Course Content; Course Descriptions; Curriculum Development; Educational Alternatives; Educational Innovation; Experimental Curriculum; *History Instruction; Individualized Curriculum; Instructional Innovation; Learning Activities; Pacing; *Program Descriptions; Secondary Education; *Social Studies; Social Studies Units; *Student Centered Curriculum; Teaching Techniques; *United States History

ABSTRACT

Eight social studies programs in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, New York, and Virginia are described which offer high school students an opportunity to study the history of the United states using innovative, nontraditional approaches. The content of the eight courses is outlined and discussed in terms of objectives, teacher rationale in designing the courses in their present form, and student options in choosing how they wish to study American history from the unit plans. The extent to which American history courses are being changed noticeably and significantly in both content and organization does differ significantly from school to school. However, the author identifies six elements and emphases that have been introduced generally into social studies curricula and that contribute widely to the revolution in the design of courses in American history as well as to changes in other aspects of social studies instruction. Also included is a listing of five generalizations that explain how new instrucitonal patterns are revolutionizing American history courses. (Author/DB)

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CURRICULUM Report

FROM THE CURRICULUM SERVICE CENTER / NASSP

Vol. 5, No. 3 April 1976

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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The Revolution in American History

Stirring Up a Change

As the nation celebrates the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution, another revolution is taking place, this one in courses and classrooms around our country where new approaches to the study of the history of the United States--new in both content and organization--are being used with increasing frequency by secondary schools. This Curriculum Report looks at some of the forms this latter-day rebellion is taking.

To be sure, this rebellious mood has not swept all before it. Many high schools continue to approach the teaching and study of American history in a traditional manner. Typically, this means starting with the period of continental exploration and progressing through the text, chapter by chapter, as far into the twentieth century as the reading ability of students and the length of the school year permit.

During the 1960s a variety of new elements and emphases were introduced into the school social studies curriculum. Today the practice continues, although more gradually than many leaders in this instructional field think it should. These new elements, which are contributing to the revolution in the design of courses in American history as well as to changes in other aspects of social studies instruction, include:

- ✓ use of inquiry, discovery, and inductive analysis of data and materials;
- ✓ introduction of materials and strategies designed to teach the methodologies of the social sciences;
- ✓ use of concepts, themes, generalizations, and materials that "wake up" the structure;
- ✓ in-depth study of original documents and case reports;
- ✓ course designs and materials that are interdisciplinary and/or that draw on social science fields such as anthropology, sociology, and political science that previously have had little representation in the secondary school curriculum; and
- ✓ application of modern teaching/learning devices such as games and other forms of simulation that add to the realism of study.

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Uncommon Responses to a Common Mandate

The extent to which American history courses are being changed noticeably and significantly by professional, scholarly influences does vary from school to school. The change thus far in a number of high schools seems--to the outside observer, anyway--to consist of only the adoption of an inquiry-based textbook like The People Make a Nation, though in some communities such a shift may seem a threatening break with tradition. Other schools, in contrast, are ready and have the resources for making much more striking modifications of their American history programs.

How American history courses are being revolutionized is suggested by the descriptions below of several actual school programs. While these examples speak for themselves, these and many other newer instructional patterns imply a handful of generalizations that merit specific note and comment.

- What has been the standard pattern for many years--a single American history course for all juniors or seniors in a school--is giving way to a pluralism of courses, better to serve the differing interests and learning styles of students and more fully to utilize the varied academic competences of the faculty.

- This pluralism is of two principal kinds, but with infinite variations in practice: (a) fully planned courses that differ in one or more significant respects, and (b) courses that are, in effect, student-built inasmuch as young people have considerable freedom to select those units they will study from a roster of available major units. A third curriculum design is a combination of these two primary ones.

- Closely related is the construction and conduct of American history courses through a penetrating and rounded analysis of a comparatively limited number of themes or issues (post-holing) rather than by the essentially superficial, story-telling approach favored traditionally.

- Some of the newer courses are interdisciplinary from start to finish and, as in the case of American studies courses, draw on several disciplines both within and outside the social sciences. More commonly, however, the themes or units of the American history course are selectively interdisciplinary, calling on specific other disciplines for enriching, interpretive, and analytical assistance with the problem or issue or development being studied.

- Finally, the trend is toward the use of teacher-prepared units that incorporate materials and activities from many sources and away from reliance on a single text, although not infrequently a text is also employed to help students grasp the continuity and relationships among the series of separate units that make up the course, and to provide a kind of panoramic background for the themes that have been selected for intensive examination.

Exempli Gratia

The Editor Notes. The first school program described here is the one with which the two teachers who drafted this Curriculum Report are associated. They were encouraged to discuss it at some length because its variety and flexibility illustrate the theme, "The Revolution in American

History." They then provide shorter annotations on five programs in other secondary schools in their part of the country and with which they are familiar. But offering young people an opportunity to study the history of their country in non-traditional forms is by no means a regional curriculum phenomenon, as the final two descriptions demonstrate.

LAKE PARK HIGH SCHOOL, 6N600 Medinah Road, Roselle, Ill. 60172
Contact: Thomas C. Harris, American history team leader

The American history program at Lake Park was designed from a chronological-topical model. This decision was made because the staff felt that by using this format students would stand to benefit in at least two major ways:

(1) they would be exposed to the general historical development of the United States; and

(2) the model allows them to study areas of special interest within the various units.

The course is available to students in two forms. One form is an individualized, self-paced study of American history, while the second is teacher-paced. The two forms have the same basic objectives and other similarities, but they do differ, as the adjectives just used imply, in the character of the learning environments employed and in the extent of the study choices open to students. A somewhat more detailed comparison of the two course designs is presented a bit farther on in this description. First, though, here is the course about as it would be presented to a student in a self-paced section.

The course consists essentially of about two dozen learning packets, each dealing with a major study theme or a significant part of it. Each packet is an organized collection of materials that includes (1) objectives, (2) information about procedures and assignments, (3) actual readings and other activities, and (4) information on methods of evaluation to be used during and at the conclusion of the unit of study.

Study of certain of these packets (designated as core packets) is required of all students. In other cases, a student may choose that sub-packet from among several so-called sub-packets bearing on a theme most in line with his interests as they relate to the theme in question. The packets ordinarily offer the student several options among learning activities.

As the year progresses, students are given more personal responsibility for selecting those uses of their class time which they feel will be most beneficial to their learning. They are also given an ever-increasing role in deciding which assignments they wish to do and what topics they wish to study.

Here are the topics of the 12 main themes (units) around which the course has been built with short comments on several of them.

Fall Semester

Unit I: How a Historian Works

II: Protest and Revolution (Includes a number of open-ended assignments.)

III: The Development of Democracy (A core section and seven optional project-type assignments.)

IV: The Civil War (A core section and three sub-packets covering military history, great persons of the Civil War, and major causes.)

V: The Wild, Wild West (This study of the American frontier includes a core section and four sub-packets on transportation and exploration, frontier law, Wild West characters, and frontier development.)

VI: Prejudice (Provides an introduction to the spring semester and the unit on minorities.)

Spring Semester

Unit I: Immigration

II: Minority Unit (Six packets are in this unit. The student must complete the one of his choice.)

Slavery and Reconstruction	American Indians
Jim Crow (1886-1954)	American Women
Civil Rights	Ethnics

III: Introduction to the Industrial Revolution (A core packet.)

IV: Agriculture or Labor or Industry or Growth of Big Government (The student must complete one of these four packets, each of which presents alternate assignment options.)

V: Formation of Foreign Policy (A core packet.)

VI: Development of U.S. Foreign Policy (Consists of three sub-packets.)

Some notes on the Wild West packet will illustrate the structure of the typical study packet:

- Students are required to complete a core section which includes a geographical study of frontier development.
- Then they participate in a seminar discussion of the characteristics and importance of the American West and a discussion of the Turner Thesis.
- Finally, and still in the core section, they prepare a position paper on the validity of the Turner Thesis.

- When these parts of the core section have been satisfactorily completed, each student selects one of the four optional sub-packets mentioned above. These options differ not only in topic, but also in the nature of the learning activities proposed.

Earlier in this description it was said that an essential difference between the two forms in which the study of American history is made available to Lake Park students is in the extent of teacher control. The following list compares the two forms--student-paced and teacher-paced--on several aspects of the teaching/learning process.

Student-Paced	*Teacher-Paced*
1-S Student moves between three classrooms, the Resource Center, and the large group as his needs dictate. Student determines where he is to work. Student is largely responsible for determining how his class time is to be used.	*1-T Student moves between the classroom, Resource Center, and large group under teacher's direction.* *Student's time is spent mainly in the classroom.* *Student's use of time is under close teacher supervision.*
2-S Student receives a bound unit packet containing objectives, procedures, activities, readings, and options.	*2-T Student receives a unit outline, which contains unit objectives and a daily schedule.*
3-S Student is provided with a large number of choices for working toward the objectives of the unit.	*3-T Student activities within a unit are determined by the instructor.*
4-S Student's bound packet for the unit contains all he needs to proceed with a self-paced study plan.	*4-T The student is given daily reading and other assignments by the instructor.*
5-S Student is given some general guidelines by the instructor on when a given packet ought to be completed. Assignment is turned in when completed.	*5-T Student is given due dates for assigned work by the instructor.*
6-S Student decides when he is prepared to do a particular activity.	*6-T All students are expected to undertake a given activity (e.g., see a film, take a test, have a seminar discussion) at the same time.*
7-S Student participates in a seminar with 1-10 other students when he is prepared to do so.	*7-T Student participates in a seminar with 15-20 other students when directed by the teacher.*
8-S Student is provided with a variety of assessment choices.	*8-T Student assessment method is determined by the instructor.*

9-S Student must receive a passing grade on any test or other assessment before moving on to a new activity or unit.

9-T Student continues on to a new activity or unit after taking a test or other assessment.

10-S Student has access to individual help during class time.

10-T Student access to individual help is largely restricted to the student's unscheduled time.

11-S & *11-T* Students in both course forms use the Social Studies Laboratory for much the same purposes; e.g., taking tests either in class or unscheduled time, reviewing a test already taken, obtaining explanations of unit objectives, turning in assignments, and obtaining new study packets.

In the two years during which students have had a choice between two forms of the American history program, they have opted in about equal numbers for each of the two patterns.

e/g NAPERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, 440 West Aurora Rd., Naperville, Ill. 60540
Contact: Robert Marshall

Students in the two high schools in the Naperville district have four options to choose from in deciding what approach they wish to take to the study of American history.

✓ U.S. History Survey follows a relatively traditional format.

✓ Contemporary Themes in U.S. History is structured around seven themes such as "What is the American Ethic?" "Civil Rights--Dissent and Alienation," and "Urban America."

This course is seminar/discussion-oriented and emphasizes social science skills such as data analysis and problem solving.

Team teaching and scheduled independent study are integral elements of the course.

✓ American Studies is a two-credit, double-period course that is limited to 60 students.

This is a combined history/literature course, which is taught by a team of instructors.

Its substantive content is the growth and development of the American mind from 1620 to the present.

Field trips and outside speakers are used extensively.

✓ American History Seminar is available only as a summer option.

This is a travel-based course which includes a two-week intensive classroom component followed by a two-week travel experience to historical sites in the eastern and central United States.

Two additional weeks of classroom instruction follow the travel.

NEOGA HIGH SCHOOL, Neoga, Ill. 62407
Contact: J. Lee McTeer, chairman, social studies department

Small high schools can also give their teaching of American history an added measure of flexibility and substance if faculty, administration, and community are committed to the upgrading of instruction in this important field, as Neoga High School demonstrates. This high school, located in central Illinois, has a total enrollment of only 380, of whom 125 are taking American history this year.

Students taking American history make up their course for the year by selecting four nine-week units or short courses from the following list:

- The Civil War
- The 20s and 30s
- The Cold War Years
- Constitutional Development
- Minorities
- Current Events
- The American Character
- U.S. and World Power
- Colonization and Independence
- Industrialization
- World War I and World War II

These units are teacher-prepared. They utilize an adopted textbook along with supplemental texts and other materials.

In the next school year students will have the additional option of taking a course of the traditional chronological variety if they prefer this approach to the selective/elective unit approach of the present course.

LA PORTE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, 1921 "A" St., La Porte, Ind. 46350
Contact: Charles Blair, assistant superintendent for instruction

In an effort to revitalize a secondary school social studies program that was employing a very traditional textbook approach, the La Porte school system used a Title III ESEA grant to visit more than 70 innovative school programs around the country, and drew on these to extensively remodel their own program.

One important feature of the new curriculum has been noted in the previous descriptions: students can make--are expected to make--basic decisions that determine the nature and content of their American history study programs.

The first major decision a student makes is which organizational pattern he will work with. There are two choices at this stage:

(1) topical packet, mini-course program, or

(2) course built on the more familiar chronological lines.

The second major decision--really, a series of decisions--must be made by the students who opt for the topical packet approach. They construct a year's

study of American history by selecting from a list of eight nine-week short courses the four they wish to take. The choices are:

- Promises Fulfilled, Promises Broken (the Great Depression)
- Slavery and Segregation in the South (does not include the Civil War)
- The Civil War
- America Moves West
- Minority Groups
- U.S. and World Survival (global issues)
- The Bicentennial
- Futuristics

The student also decides the sequence in which he will take the four mini-courses selected.

KOKOMO HIGH SCHOOL, Kokomo, Ind. 46901
Contact: Joseph Dunbar

Kokomo has a program similar to the one in La Porte. Students can make a basic choice between a course that follows a familiar American history outline and a course made up of nine-week units on subjects that synthesize several topics and frequently are interdisciplinary, such as "Politics and Morality" and "A World Without War."

The staff reports that this American history program has met with wide student support, to the point where the faculty cannot offer all the nine-week units that students have proposed.

KAUKAUNA HIGH SCHOOL, Kaukauna, Wis. 54130
Contact: George Anderson, chairman, social studies department

No course specifically identified as American history is offered at Kaukauna High School. However, students there are required to take three years of social studies, with American history units spread throughout the three-year period.

The complete social studies curriculum consists of about 35 nine-week units, and each semester students make selections from this list. The units are teacher-designed and make use of multiple texts. Throughout the program much emphasis is placed on processes such as decision making and valuing.

JOHN DEWEY HIGH SCHOOL, 50 Avenue X, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223
Contact: Sol Levine, principal

Some comments on the total curriculum will help the reader understand this large, innovative New York City high school's offerings in American history. The basic consideration is that the entire four-year program of the school operates entirely on an elective basis as far as course choice is concerned, although there are some general requirements for graduation.

Requirements are expressed quantitatively in "cycles." A "cycle" is the seven-week time span on which all courses are built. The minimum social studies requirement for graduation is 15 cycles. This may appear to be only another way of saying that three years of social studies are required, but this is not a satisfactory translation; what it means is that the student is required to take 15 seven-week courses in the social studies, some of which may be sequential or be part of a package of courses, but more often the courses are essentially independent of each other and can be taken in whatever order the student may choose. And now for a look at courses in American history, quoting primarily from the school's course catalog.

All students must choose one of the following five-cycle sequences which focus on American history and American studies to complete the eleventh grade requirement.

Sequence A (All one-cycle courses which are non-sequential and may be taken in any order.)

1. Development of American Democracy. An examination of the men and events which have contributed to the development of American democracy.

2. American Government. An investigation of the background, processes, and problems of national government in the United States.

3. American People. A study of immigration, problems of social adjustment for new groups in our society, and the contributions of selected groups to the making of American society.

4. American Cultural Values. This course examines how European ideas, the frontier, and public education influenced American culture.

5. American Foreign Policy. An investigation of the process by which foreign policy is made, and a discussion of those men and events which have contributed to America's rise to a position of world leadership.

Sequence B Advanced Placement American History. A five-sequential-cycle college-level course designed to introduce students to the major developments and interpretations of American history. Enrollment requires approval of the department chairman.

Sequence C The American Dream. A five-sequential-cycle course that revolves around the concept of the American "dream" and its significance in the history of the United States. Interdisciplinary in design, the course expects students to make extensive use of works of fiction and non fiction, field trips, films, and special projects. Approval required.

John Dewey students also have available an extensive array of one-cycle electives relating to American history on which they can draw in planning their programs. Among these are:

- The New Deal. Surveys the 1930s, the depression, and F.D.R.
- The Supreme Court in American History. Examines major court decisions and their impact on American society.
- The American Revolution. Stresses life in America during the period, and the impact of the Revolution on this country and on world history.
- Irish in America. Introduces students to the contributions of the Irish in American history.
- Civil War and Reconstruction. Surveys developments in the United States in the 30-year period which ended in 1877.

YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL, 5201 North 28th St., Arlington, Va. 22207
Contacts: Sara Jane Knight, social studies department chairperson, and
Gerard Shelton, English department chairperson

At Yorktown High School, American Civilization is an alternative to the regular course in Virginia and United States History. The course has been designed to coordinate the teaching of American literature and American history. It was initiated in the light of the natural and valuable relationship that exists between the two disciplines.

- ✓ The course is assigned a two-period block of time in the school's schedule. A team of two teachers works with the class--usually about 55 students--each time it meets. Both members of the team are certified in both English and social studies.
- ✓ Correlation of the two subject fields is exploited wherever appropriate as a way of providing fresh and deeper insights into the development of our American civilization and its goals--past and present. It is hoped that through this approach students will not only gain a richer appreciation and understanding of their society, but will also come to see their relationship to future developments.
- ✓ While there is a correlation of English and history "wherever appropriate," the course also treats the two disciplines independently. Literature as a creative art form and historical research and interpretation remain intact.

✓ American Civilization allows and encourages teachers and students to draw on other disciplines in addition to the two main ones on which the course is built. For instance, art and music materials and experiences provide valuable, enriching course content.

✓ This year, the American Issues Forum developed by the National Endowment for the Humanities provides a thematic approach for the program.

In all of the programs described here it is possible for students to extend or enrich their understanding of selected aspects of American history through independent study. Even so, some of the details of Yorktown High's Community-Related Independent Study Project, a voluntary supplement to its American Civilization course, show how one school makes use of area resources for instructional resources on an individual student basis.

It must be admitted, of course, that the Washington, D.C. region, of which Arlington is a part, possesses some unique resources. But, as the samples of project themes imply, opportunities for an array of community-based studies of history-related topics should be possible in most schools. The information given here about topics and the operation of Yorktown's Community-Related Independent Study Project is excerpted from a memorandum for students.

Suggested Topics

Although the topic may be one of basically literary or historical merit, there are innumerable topics which combine aspects of both subjects.

- The American Social Novel. The student may read from several authors of social novels and then concentrate on the writings of one.
- Political Journalism. A study of journalistic style as well as content.
- The American Politician. Biographical, political science, and historical references as well as fictional accounts will give a picture of the politician and his role in our society.
- Appalachia, a Regional Study. People, culture, problems, literature.
- Colonial Life and Experience. After reading widely in this period of history, the student may wish to concentrate on reevaluating relationships with and grievances with the mother country, a study of the period through primary sources, the Puritan influence, or one of the three groups of British colonies.
- Lincoln, a Study of an Era. Understanding of the period and issues during Lincoln's political life as well as the man himself through literary and historical writing.
- History of Reform in America. Wide reading to be done before choosing an era or topic.

Directions

- Choose a topic related to twentieth century American history or culture.
- Read widely in the topic chosen for a semester.
- Develop a formal bibliography of all reading done, to be turned in at the end of the semester.
- During the second semester, a minimum of three interviews must be held with persons in the metropolitan area who are competent to discuss the topic.
  - A list of potential questions must be presented to the teacher before the interviews are held.
  - A summary of each interview must be written and turned in.
- After all reading, research, and interviews have been completed, the student will write an essay on a particular aspect of the topic studied.
- The student should present to the teacher by May 1 a suggested method of sharing the topic studied. (Report, guest speaker, film, etc.)
- The teacher will then select several of the semester topics to be presented to the entire class. Selection will be based on historical importance, scope of appeal, and thoroughness of study and research.

✓ The project is voluntary, but once chosen it is to be completed!

The material for this discussion of changes being made in the American history curriculum in high schools was assembled by THOMAS C. HARRIS, team leader in American history, and LARRY E. MINGS, Title III project director, at Lake Park High School in Roselle, Ill.

Curriculum Report is a publication of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, Va. 22091, and is sponsored by the Association's Curriculum Committee. The *Reports* are distributed without charge to all NASSP members. Additional copies may be ordered: single copies, 50¢ each; 2-10 copies, 40¢ each; prices for larger quantities on request. *Payment must accompany orders of $10 or less.*

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